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THE WASHINGTON POST
20 February 1982

State Dept. Hunts Leaker Of Haig's Conversations

From News Services

The administration has ordered an investigation into leaks at the State Department amid published reports that Secretary Alexander M. Haig Jr. privately characterized the British foreign secretary as a "duplicious bastard," officials said yesterday.

The State Department's Bureau of Security has been called in to investigate wholesale leaks of information from the department's inner circles.

In excerpts from notes published in The Washington Post yesterday Haig allegedly called British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington a "duplicious bastard," described Saudi Arabian government officials as "arrogant" and expressed fears that Egypt may loosen its ties with the United States and Israel once it gets back the last of the occupied Sinai peninsula in April.

The notes were a scribbled summary by "one of the people" who attended morning staff meetings on the seventh floor of the State Department over several months.

The meetings are Haig's most frequent form of contact with his senior staff, some 20 undersecretaries, assistant secretaries and other key aides. However, notes taken at the meetings are often shown to other people and become the basis of subsequent policy decisions. Thus, literally hundreds of people could have access to the information.

At a news conference yesterday in Bal Harbour, Fla., where he held a two-hour meeting with the executive council of the AFL-CIO, Haig sought to make light of the leak.

"I have three things to say about it: first, it couldn't have been me speaking that clearly; second, I don't recall ever having such exciting staff meetings, and third, I hope this puts to rest the myth that there is no

imagination at the State Department," Haig said.

But he went on to say, "Henry Kissinger had his Oriana Fallaci; I have my loyal staff." In a famous 1971 interview with an Italian journalist, Kissinger compared himself with the Lone Ranger and otherwise confirmed suspicions that he had a great deal of ego and self-esteem.

A Foreign Office representative in London, asked about the characterization of Carrington, said relations between Carrington and Haig "reflect the excellent relations between the United States and Britain." She would not comment directly on the article, but indicated that Carrington had seen it.

Israeli officials had no formal reaction to the report, but a senior government official said, "The assessment that Egypt will move closer to the Arab states, if reported correctly, comes as no surprise to us."

State Department officials have not been asked to take lie detector tests, as happened last month at the Pentagon after reports of a high-level staff meeting became public.

The department's press office said, "Polygraphs are used by the State Department only after all other investigative methods have been exhausted and where there is a reasonable presumption that the use of the polygraph may clarify the matter.

"The employee must volunteer to undergo the test; the employee is advised in advance that a refusal to take the test cannot be construed as an admission of guilt or otherwise interpreted to his detriment."

Investigators in the department's Bureau of Security have begun to put together a list of officials who were present at the staff meetings reported in the memos appearing in The Post. Those memos cover about a year.